

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



**PA 11-23—sHB 6481**

*Public Health Committee*

*Government Administration and Elections Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LUPUS  
EDUCATION AND AWARENESS PLAN**

**SUMMARY:** This act establishes, within the Department of Public Health (DPH), an Interagency and Partnership Advisory Panel on Lupus. Lupus is a chronic inflammatory disease that occurs when the body's immune system attacks its own tissues and organs. Inflammation caused by lupus can affect many different body systems, including the joints, skin, kidneys, blood cells, heart, and lungs.

The governor, DPH commissioner, legislative leaders, and certain legislative commissions appoint advisory panel members. The panel must develop and implement a comprehensive lupus education and awareness plan after evaluating and analyzing existing educational materials and resources.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2011

**INTERAGENCY AND PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY PANEL**

*Members*

The 13-member advisory panel consists of:

1. a nonphysician medical clinician with significant experience treating lupus recommended by the Connecticut Advanced Practice Registered Nurse Society and appointed by the governor;
2. five people appointed by the DPH commissioner, one with lupus recommended by the state chapter of the Lupus Foundation of America; a scientist from a Connecticut university with experience in lupus who participates in various scientific fields, including biomedical, social, translational, behavioral, or epidemiological research recommended by the Medical and Scientific Advisory Council of the state chapter of the Lupus Foundation; a physician with significant experience treating lupus, recommended by the Connecticut Medical Society; a representative from the state chapter of the Lupus Foundation; and a state resident representing the Lupus Research Institute;
3. one member each appointed by the House speaker, Senate president pro tempore, and the House and Senate minority leaders; and
4. one person each appointed by the executive directors of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, the African-American Affairs Commission, and the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission.

The appointing authorities must make their appointments by July 31, 2011 and fill any vacancies. Members serve two two-year terms. The DPH commissioner

selects the chairperson from among the members.

The panel must meet quarterly and at any other time the chair or a majority of the members requests a meeting. The chairperson must schedule the first meeting by August 30, 2011. Seven members constitute a quorum and a majority vote of the quorum is needed for any official action. The Public Health Committee's administrative staff serves as the panel's administrative staff.

*Needs Assessment and Comprehensive Plan*

The panel must (1) analyze the current state of education on lupus in Connecticut; (2) evaluate available materials and resources from government agencies, hospitals, and lupus advocacy organizations; and (3) conduct a needs assessment or use a similar mechanism to identify gaps in current lupus education modalities in the state.

Once the needs assessment is completed, the advisory panel must report its results in writing to the Public Health Committee and DPH. The panel must then develop and implement, with input from the committee and DPH, a comprehensive lupus education and awareness plan to improve education and awareness of lupus for health care providers, public health personnel, patients, and people who may have lupus.

The plan must include recommendations on how to best:

1. distribute medically sound, government-endorsed, lupus health information through local health departments, schools, agencies on aging, employer wellness programs, physicians and other health professionals, hospitals, health plans and health maintenance organizations, women's health groups, and nonprofit and community-based organizations;
2. use community volunteers to distribute promotional brochures and other materials on lupus education and awareness;
3. develop educational materials for health professionals that identify the most recent scientific and medical information and clinical applications regarding lupus treatment;
4. work to increase knowledge among physicians, nurses, and health and human services professionals about the importance of lupus diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation;
5. support continuing medical education programs in the state's leading academic institutions by ensuring that such institutions are provided the most recent scientific and medical information and clinical applications regarding lupus treatment;
6. conduct statewide workshops and seminars for extensive professional development on the care and management of lupus patients to bring the latest information on clinical advances to health care providers; and
7. maintain and develop a directory of lupus-related health care services, including a list of specialists in lupus diagnosis and treatment that DPH can distribute, within available appropriations, to individuals with lupus and their families, representatives from volunteer organizations, health care professionals, health plans, local health agencies and authorities, and other state agencies.

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The advisory panel must submit its initial plan to DPH and the Public Health Committee by October 1, 2012 and may make periodic revisions to it thereafter.

### *DPH Assistance*

Under the act, DPH, within available appropriations, can help the panel by distributing educational materials to state health care providers serving minority populations, among other things. DPH may accept funds from any source to implement the act's provisions and must take any necessary actions to maximize federal funding.

OLR Tracking: JK:RP:JL:ts